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Needed: A Closer Look At The CIA

As the pieces fall slowly into place, following last week's disastrous adventure in Cuba, the part played by the Central Intelligence Agency becomes increasingly suspect. The picture the CIA presents is one of fumbling ineptitude. It failed utterly to provide a clear assessment of internal conditions in Cuba. Had an accurate estimate been made, the ill-fated launching of the counter revolution might never have been undertaken.

President Kennedy has assumed personal responsibility for whatever role the United States played in the invasion, but there have been statements that the original plot was hatched during the administration of President Eisenhower. It does not particularly matter which administration was responsible. The CIA provided intelligence data to both, and any role played by this country was based upon that data.

An offspring of the Office of Strategic Services during World War II, the CIA is the most completely independent agency of the government. It is responsible directly to the President. Its operations are known to Congress only in a general way; the number of its employes and its budget are closely guarded secrets.

Since the Cuban debacle there have been demands that the CIA be reorganized, or at least called upon to explain its failure in this particular instance. Sen Mike Mansfield of Montana, the Democratic leader of the Senate, has urged a thorough overhaul of the agency and placing it under the supervi-

sion of the secretary of state. Former Vice President Nixon also is said to have recommended to President Kennedy a shakeup within the CIA to separate its spying and direct action functions.

Both of these suggestions are aimed at accomplishing the same thing—elimination of the CIA's privilege to take unilateral action. At present the agency is empowered not only to ferret out intelligence; it can also use this intelligence by becoming directly involved in such affairs as the Cuban fiasco.

It is painfully clear that CIA intelligence work in Cuba and among the counter revolutionaries of Florida and in South American nations was faulty to a degree that makes the whole organization suspect. The two chief elements of failure were not knowing whether there would be a popular response to a counter-invasion, which there wasn't; and not knowing the full extent of arms supplied to Cuba by its Communist allies. Had the CIA spy network functioned properly the counter revolutionaries would have thought twice before storming the Cuban beaches only to be put to route within 72 hours.

The failure of the intelligence system to operate in Cuba makes it mandatory that the agency's power to take direct action be reviewed. Surely, if its spies cannot provide reasonably accurate information, as they were unable to do in the Cuban affair, the CIA should not hold in its hands the power to participate directly in any foreign adventure involving the United States.—T. W. C.